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and pleasing ideas and reflections. In such sequestered scenes, the purest pleasures are to be found, pleasures which kings and courtiers never experience, surrounded by crouds of sycophants, and in possession of all that power can bestow. Here the mind unbends itself, and awakened to the finer feelings which a view of the works of nature excites, forgets for a moment all those projects of ambition, and those desires that render mankind unhappy. In retirement alone can we experience those delicious sensations which form the purest sources of delight to a warm imagination.

In the busy scenes of the world, the softer feelings of nature become blunted, by being suppressed when interest or pleasure comes in competition. The mind, accustomed to deceit and falsehood, becomes distrustful; and is no longer capable of receiving the warm impression of any noble sentiment, which too much commerce with the world destroys. In the calm retirement of a country life, we behold man in a different light and with more pleasing sensations. Undisturbed by those jarring passions and that unsatisfied ambition, which never fail to bring misery and disappointment in their train, he employs his time and talents in pursuits gratifying to himself, and useful to his country. I wish, however, to observe, that it is only the man of true wisdom, and who knows how to place a right value on the gifts and the enjoyment of nature, that can feel the degree of pure happiness to be experienced in retirement from the bustle of life. The wretch who sacrifices every thing great and honourable to interest or passion, dead to the noblest feelings of humanity, can never receive delight from the sublime and innocent emotions excited by nature's works. Happy is he who can look with a philosophical contempt on the vain and childish pursuits which engross the bulk of mankind, and who living to nature alone, knows how to relish her simple gifts.

"Oh! knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he, who far from public rage,
With a choice few retired,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life."

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

MR. EDITOR,

I AM a subscriber to your useful and entertaining Magazine, and request a spare corner for the few following lines. On looking over No. 6th, I saw some extracts from the Hibernian Bible Society, also an account of a letter from a clergyman in a populous part of the north of Ireland, stating that in his neighbourhood the bible "could not be procured for any money"!!! I would ask this clergyman in what part of the north of Ireland he lives: I have been through all the counties in the province of Ulster, and was led to think the communications with Belfast, Newry, Coleraine, and Derry, extended through the northern districts. In all these and most other inland towns in Ulster, there are respectable booksellers, who import and sell the scriptures at a fair value. I have no doubt of the purity and laudable designs of the society, but I would beg leave to drop a hint or two on the subject.

I live in a populous part of the north of Ireland, also where a number of very poor families are; so soon as our good clergyman proposed the plan of raising money for purchasing the scriptures for the poor, I was anxious to contribute my mite and encourage others, but I confess after the books arrived, and our clergyman appointed a day for giving them out, I was much disappointed. Instead of seeing the poor supplied, few but the wealthy were receiving any; the reason was, that the very poor went to receive them gratis; and although reduced one eighth, one fourth, or as some say, one half, yet even this they were unable to pay. Is this the design of the society? Would it not answer a better end that in each congregation, or district, a few people be appointed to inquire who are unable to purchase, and let them have the scriptures gratis; and the second class be allowed to purchase at a reduced price: and if the clergymen are become retailers, let them take a fair price, so that the fair dealer may not be injured, but have an equal chance for his share, &c. as I assure you Mr. Editor, I have known

hawkers receive copies of the new-testament, from agents of the society, which I think was not the original design. Yours, &c. M.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ACCOUNT OF JOHN DE COURCEY, BARON OF KINSALE.

THE following romantic account of this ancient baron, in which is assigned the cause of the singular privilege still retained in that family, of appearing covered in the royal presence, may not be unacceptable.

John De Courcey, the descendant of a noble family who had come into England with William the first, signalised himself in Ireland, when very young, during the reign of Henry II. where it is said he fought five great battles, and conquered the whole province of Ulster, and part of Connaught.

In the year 1183 he was created earl of Ulster, and lord Connaught, and Henry the second granted him by patent, to continue to his heirs, the property of all the lands in Ireland that he could conquer with his sword, together with the donation of bishopricks and abbies, reserving only homage and fealty.

For some time after this he was governor of Ireland, either in conjunction with William Fitz Aldelme, or by himself. But in the year 1200, Hugh Lacy the younger, earl of Meath, was joined with him in the government.

Some time after, his colleague, by his artifices, contrived to injure him in the king's opinion, and at length to supplant him altogether. The crime of which he was accused was, speaking disrepectful words, highly reflecting on the king, concerning the murder of his nephew, Arthur, duke of Brittany. This accusation irritated king John so much, that he made Lacy sole governor, and ordered him to seize the earl of Ulster and send him prisoner to England.

Lacy gladly obeyed the command, and attempted several times to take him by force, but finding that would not do, he at length hired some of the Earl's servants to betray him. Their treachery took effect on Good Friday: for, on that day, as the earl, according to the devotion of those times, was walking unarmed, and barefooted, round the church-yard of Downpatrick, for penance, Lacy and his party fell on him unawares. He having nothing to defend himself, seized a wooden cross that stood in the church yard. It is reported, says the chronicler who relates these anecdotes, that he slew thirteen of Lacy's men, but being at length overpowered, he was forced to submit.

The traitors met with the due reward of such a service; they asked their employer for a passport for England, with a certificate of the good service they had performed: he acquiesced in their desire, and gave them a letter, with directions that they should neither open it till it was demanded from them, nor ever return to Ireland. The contents were as follow:

"I, Hugh De Lacy, Lord Justice of Ireland, servant to my dread sovereign Lord King John, to all that shall read these letters, greeting: Know ye, that these men, whose names are under written, served some time Sir John De Courcey, late earl of Ulster, but now in durance in the tower of London, and for a sum of money betrayed their master into my hands: I deem them no better than Judas the traitor. How hardly soever I have conceived of Courcey, I hold them a thousand times more damnable traitors; wherefore, let no subject within the king's dominion give them any entertainment, but spit in their faces, and suffer them to rogue about, and wander like Jews."

He provided them with a vessel and provisions, but gave them no pilot or sailors; so that through want of skill they could not keep their course, but after having been tossed about for some time at the will of the wind and tide, they at length got into the harbour of Cork. Here they were no sooner landed than they were apprehended, and after undergoing a trial, convicted of having returned contrary to the Lord Justice's orders, and by his direction all hanged together.

De Courcey, after having been thus made prisoner, was sent to England, and lodged in the tower of London, where he was kept in confinement for more than a year: he owed his liberty